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HERMAN MERIVALE 1819-1844

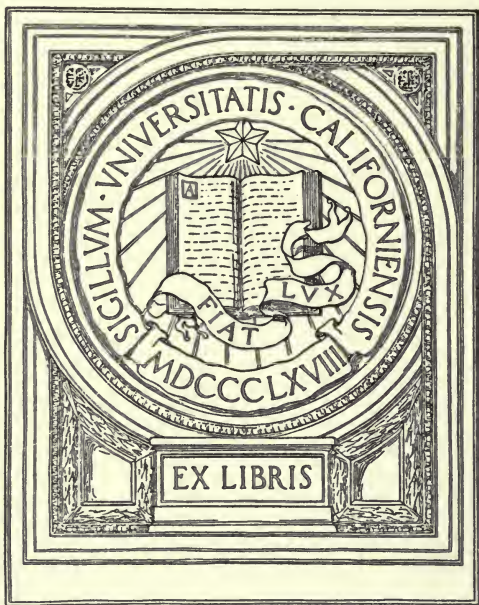
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**LEAVES FROM THE DIARY
OF A LITERARY AMATEUR**

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LEAVES FROM THE DIARY OF
A LITERARY AMATEUR

JOHN HERMAN MERIVALE

1819—1844

BY EDWARD H. A. KOCH, M.A.

J. H. Merivale

HAMPSTEAD: THE PRIORY PRESS
MDCCCCXI



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To
MISS CONSTANCE HILL
THE REVIVER OF
MANY DELIGHTFUL
MEMORIES

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PREFATORY NOTE

THIS little work has a local origin. The author of the Diary referred to on the title page was buried in the old churchyard at Hampstead. The writer was in search of information concerning Mr Merivale, whose portrait he hoped to add to a collection of the worthies of Hampstead, when he came across the diary in a privately printed book of *Family Memorials*. It appeared to him full of interest, reviving, as it does, memories of the brilliant society, literary and social, of the early part of the nineteenth century. A magazine article was intended, but as this would have meant a very limited use of the available material, the writer was extremely glad to fall in with the spirited suggestion of the publisher "to make a book of it."

The illustrations are of great interest. The portrait of John Herman Merivale, which stands first, is from an engraving from the crayon by E. U. Eddis. Mr Merivale's impressions of it are given in a note. That of Joanna Baillie is from a facsimile of the original water-colour wash drawing by Mary Ann Knight. The facsimile was given by Dr G. C.

Williamson to Hampstead Parish Church. He retains the copyright and it is by his kind permission that it is reproduced for the first time. Joanna Baillie acknowledged it to be the best portrait she had ever had done of her, but would not allow it to be published as she did not wish to see it about "all over the place."

Windmill Hill, Hampstead, and Barton Place, Exeter, are from pencil drawings specially made for this book by Mrs Alexander Koch.

ILLUSTRATIONS

“J. H. Merivale.” From the engraved portrait after E. U. Eddis, in the possession of the Trustees of Hampstead Parish Church

Frontispiece

“Joanna Baillie.” From the water-colour by Mary Ann Knight, in the possession of the Trustees of Hampstead Parish Church, *to face 16*

“Windmill Hill, Hampstead.” From a pencil drawing by Mary Koch, *to face 32*

“Barton Place, Exeter.” From a pencil drawing by Mary Koch, *to face 48*

JOHN HERMAN MERIVALE

IN 1823 there came to live on Windmill Hill, Hampstead, in the house next to that of Joanna and Agnes Baillie, John Merivale, of Barton Place, Exeter, and Ann his wife. John Merivale's father was of Middleton Cheney in Northamptonshire, and claimed descent from an ancient and respectable stock. He had been long resident in Devonshire, but left there owing to the scattering of his family and the need of cheerful society in the declining years of life.

Hampstead offered many attractions. Miss Aikin writing to Dr Channing only ten years later, after referring to the situation and the salubrity of the air, continues:

“Several circumstances render society here peculiarly easy and pleasant; in many respects the place unites the advantages and escapes the evils both of London and the provincial towns. It is near enough to allow its inhabitants to partake in the society, the amusements and the accommodations of the capital as freely as even the dissipated could desire; whilst it affords pure air, lovely scenery, and retired and beautiful walks; and because everyone is supposed to have a London set of friends, neighbours do not think it necessary, as in the provinces, to

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force their acquaintance upon you. Of local society you may have much, little, or none, as you please; and with a little, which is very good, you may associate on the easiest terms; then the summer brings an influx of Londoners who are often genteel and agreeable people, and pleasingly vary the scene."¹

His only son, John Herman, was born in 1779, and had in 1805 married Louisa Heath Drury, whose father was appointed Headmaster of Harrow in 1785. They had six sons and six daughters, all of whom seem to have been remarkably gifted. Herman (1806-1874), the eldest, was a fellow of Balliol, professor of political economy at Oxford, and, after holding various Government posts, became permanent Under-Secretary for India in 1859. He was the author of *Lectures on Colonization* and a *Life of Sir Henry Lawrence*. Charles (1808-1893), the second, became the well-known Dean of Ely of that name, and the historian of the Roman Empire.

Abraham Mendelssohn is reported to have said that in early life he was honoured as the son of a distinguished father, in old age as the father of a famous son. John Herman Merivale had a distinguished grandfather, Samuel Merivale, whose journals, if published, would

throw no inconsiderable light upon the religious thought of his times; and for his grandfather's sake he was desirous of becoming celebrated as the editor of these journals, but no publisher would take the risk of issuing them. He lived to enjoy the rising fame of both the sons mentioned, but also to be himself widely recognized as a writer of authority, a poet of merit, and a translator of singular felicity of Greek, Italian and German verse, and to be at his death sincerely regretted by his many distinguished friends.²

Born, as has been said, in 1779, John Herman Merivale was bred up in strict Presbyterian principles.

He proceeded to St John's College, Cambridge, but was of course at that time ineligible for a degree. Here he formed many lifelong friendships, the chief of which was with Thomas Denman, afterwards Lord Chief Justice³. On his arrival in London, whither he went to read for the bar, he was at once admitted by means of the Denman family into an agreeable and cultivated circle of acquaintances. Among other friends were the Baillies—Dr Matthew Baillie, the distinguished physician and brother of Agnes and Joanna, and his wife, who was a sister of the future Lord Chief. From a letter

rary work. Among his intimates was the Rev. Robert Bland, a man of curious and wayward genius, a writer of brilliant letters, who perhaps just failed of greatness. In collaboration with some others, including Denman and Francis Hodgson, afterwards Provost of Eton, they issued in 1806 *Translations chiefly from the Greek Anthology*. This has been re-issued several times, and in the edition of 1833, initials assigned the poems to the various translators. Mr Merivale reprinted his contributions in his collected *Poems* in 1838.

The book was the subject of a long notice in the *Quarterly Review* of July, 1833, which spoke of it as "the product of a scholar, a poet, and a gentleman—one on whose bright and amiable character a strong political bias has impressed no spot, and whose present work will go, we trust, a great way in bringing sound and elegant scholarship into repute again. . . . [His] preface . . . is a model of unaffected modesty and goodness of heart."

Byron, who had known Merivale from old Harrow days when the latter came there to cultivate the friendship of the Headmaster's only daughter, was so pleased by the performance that he invited

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“ . . . those minds, that nobly could trans-
fuse

The glorious spirit of the Grecian muse,”

“To scorn a borrow’d tone

Resign Achaia’s lyre and strike your own.”⁴

In 1814 Merivale again attracted Byron’s attention by a free translation of the *Morgante Maggiore* of Luigi Pulci, which he published under the title of *Orlando in Roncesvalles*. Of this Byron wrote: “Have read Roncesvaux with very great pleasure, . . . see very little room for criticism. You have written a very noble Poem, and nothing but the detestable taste of the day can do you harm—but I think you will beat it. Your measure is uncommonly well-chosen and wielded.”⁵ Yet another translation, published by Murray in 1820, was *The Two First Cantos of Richardetto*, a poem by Nicolò Fortiguerra. The original was written in 1715 and is designed to be a continuation of Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*.

“He was a frequent contributor to the highest periodical literature of the day, a day in which Jeffery and Brougham and Macaulay, Scott and Southey and Milman, were among those who wrote for the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*,” says Arnould in his *Life of Lord*

Denman, paying Merivale a studied compliment by the association of names.

Apropos of one of these articles, Byron again appears. The following amusing circumstance is related in the *Journal*:

“To-day C. [Campbell, the poet] called, and while sitting here, in came Merivale. During our colloquy, C. (ignorant that M. was the writer) abused the ‘mawkishness of *The Quarterly* review of Grimm’s Correspondence.’ I (knowing the secret) changed the conversation as soon as I could; and C. went away quite convinced of having made the most favourable impression on his new acquaintance. Merivale is luckily a very good-natured fellow, or God He knows what might have been engendered from such a malaprop. I did not look at him while this was going on, but I felt like a coal, for I like Merivale, as well as the article in question.”⁶

Merivale read this in Moore’s *Life* years afterwards, and writes:

“Of the few interviews I can boast of having had with him, I see that he has himself journalized *one*—that on the occasion of Campbell’s being present, when he abused my article

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on Grimm in the *Quarterly*. I remember it well, and it is all true as Byron has recorded, except that I had *fancied* Campbell's criticism referred rather to the Anti-Gallican spirit of the review—in which I felt a little conscious to myself of deserving some censure—than to its 'mawkishness.' However, as Byron lays a stress on the word, I suppose it was the one he actually used. I felt nothing on the occasion but a nervous fear of betraying myself. As soon as Campbell had left the room, Byron burst into a violent fit of laughter, and exclaimed, 'Oh, how I wish Harry Drury had been here to improve the awkwardness!'"

Continuing, he says:

"Another time I met Byron was soon after his marriage, at Murray's, when Walter Scott came in upon us, and I enjoyed a good hour of their company. Our talk (or rather *theirs*, for I said mighty little) was of Miss Baillie and *De Montfort*. Byron assumed the incredulous, and Scott told (inimitably well) a horrible legendary tale of school-boy hatred ending in a most cold-blooded act of assassination, after a thirty years' interval and separation, in distant regions. Once I spent two or three days with him, Denman and Hodgson, at H. Drury's.

He amused us with divers intriguing anecdotes, of many of which I very potently doubted the veracity. . . . Another time I was in his company was at poor G. E. G.'s, the editor of the *Monthly Review*, at Turnham Green, when I recollect the discourse turning on vampires and all that class of superstition, and my sending him my *Dead Men of Pesth* in consequence. It was about the time of his second edition of *The Giaour*, in which he introduces an allusion to the thing. I *think* also that he was of a party at Douglas Kinnaird's, where I met (the only time I did so) Sheridan, and that it must be the party to which he refers when he mentions his meeting him at D. K.'s for the last time. Harris of Covent Garden, Robins the auctioneer, and Colman were also there, and one object was to bring the managers of the two theatres to a good understanding. Sheridan was very entertaining during his *second* bottle. His third made him quite a bore. . . ."

Merivale accepted Byron's challenge, and composed a considerable amount of original verse, which he collected and published, together with some of his translations, in two volumes, in 1838. These were dedicated to Joanna Baillie, "in humble testimony of her rare and exalted genius . . . with every senti-

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ment of respect and affection." He also published several legal treatises. His last literary work was again one of translation. He had been attracted to German, which he learnt at the age of sixty. In 1844, the year of his death, he published *The Minor Poems of Schiller of the Second and Third Periods*. Some of these had previously appeared in the *New Monthly Review*, and some were the work of his son, the Dean.

There is nothing original in his own poetry. One of his earliest attempts was a continuation of Beattie's *Minstrel*, and all his work is more or less imitative, so that, in spite of Byron's appreciation, it is never likely to be disinterred from the beautifully printed Pickering volumes which enshrine it—the elegant refined verse of a scholar, with the characteristic limitations of the essentially scholarly. It is more surprising that his translations of Schiller are not remembered. Some are uncommonly well done, and are among the best translations of German into English ever attempted. Similar is the verdict of the *Quarterly Review* on his translations from Dante, which are, it says, better than those of Cary or Wright, and, indeed, as regards some passages, they "never before had so good an English dress." Like Fitzgerald he had "little

of the fierce, imperative, creative impulse," though, unlike Fitzgerald, his was far from being a melancholy temperament. His own ambition in youth was to be a historian, and the bent of his mind was that of a chronicler. As has been said, one of his most cherished schemes was the issue of his grandfather's journals. He was undoubtedly disappointed that no publisher would accept them. Perhaps he had a thought to the public when writing his diary.

However that may be, it makes very good reading. He shows a keenly observant eye, a mind with a grasp of essentials, and an appreciation of humour which is all the more pleasing since it is never malicious. Possessing these gifts we are fortunate that in addition he associated with many people in whom the world feels an ever living interest.

Portions of the Diary have been preserved by Miss A. W. Merivale, his daughter, in her privately printed *Family Memorials*.⁸ This book is now very scarce, and there needs no apology for reprinting some things from so attractive a store.

It is delightful to think of old Hampstead in the early nineteenth century. Some of its many memories, literary and artistic, have recently been revived for us in a charming book.⁹ John

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Merivale and his wife lived on Windmill Hill. John Lewis Mallet, and his wife, who was their only surviving daughter, lived at Belmont, now Vane House. These with the Baillies were some of the connexions which brought John Herman Merivale into touch with Hampstead and its society. The Diary refers often to both place and people. As it is even convenient it will certainly be deemed excusable if a writer who lives in Hampstead, in a book published there, is glad to group these memories together and to mention some others later.

If Thomas Norton Longman, the younger, gave all his well-known dinners to "Our Authors" at his house on Greenhill, then we find Mr Merivale's first recorded visit to Hampstead date as far back as 1819.¹⁰

"May 28. Dined at Longman's on Friday. Present Sir James Mackintosh, Sir James Smith (the Linnaean), Colonel Wilks, Tom Moore, Bowles (the Poet), Dr Roget and some others. Mackintosh a fund of good humour and anecdote."¹¹

Sir James Mackintosh (1765-1832), the philosopher, and author of a *History of the Revolution in England in 1688*, which is the subject of

one of Macaulay's essays, is frequently mentioned. He was a great figure in the social life of his time. He lies buried under a large altar-tomb, overshadowed by a yew-tree in the old churchyard at Hampstead, and there is a tablet commemorating his youngest daughter Elizabeth on the south wall of the church, with an inscription, evidently by Sir James who had some reputation for this kind of thing.

On another occasion he had a long carriage drive with the philosopher:

"1824. Oct. 25. I went to Carshalton by the coach, at Denman's invitation, to meet Sir James Mackintosh, with whom I returned in his his carriage on Wednesday morning. My time was spent most pleasantly, and in Sir James I found an incessant fund of criticism and anecdote of which it is in vain to attempt to detail the smallest part. He recites poetry, French, English and Latin, with great fluency and animation, and though sometimes verbal and minute, is generally just and sound in his critical opinions. Dryden, Milton, Crabbe, Burke, were the English authors we most discussed. . . . Bonaparte he considers as one of the most blameless of usurpers and conquerors, but less estimable than Cromwell. . . . The reason why

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Walter Scott can never avow himself the author of the novels is that, being unhandsomely pressed by the King, he denied somewhat too stoutly. Sir J. M. is a great reader, too, of novels—a special admirer of Jane Austen, and, next to her, of Miss Ferrier, the authoress of *Marriage and Inheritance*.

“He has lately been at Paris and in Holland. . . . The tour of Holland is one of the most amusing and instructive of any in Europe, and may well be made in a fortnight. People well instructed, comfortable and happy, government good, society unostentatious, free and pleasing. Vulgar to admire nothing but picturesque scenery—all nature has its charms: the Rhine at its mouth as well as at its source.”

This opinion of Dutch scenery is a delightful precursor of our modern taste in such matters.

In 1822 he met Lord Erskine,¹² who died the following year, aged seventy-three:

“May 5. Dined at Denman’s. . . . I was quite charmed with Lord Erskine, whom (though fully prepared to admire) I found more kind and gentlemanly, and pleasant, frank and insinuating than I had even imagined. With much of his fine energy still retained, he is, however,

beginning to exhibit pretty unequivocal marks of age in his countenance."

Concerning his impressions of the great Coleridge, we have minute particulars:

"1825. August 20. On Thursday I went to Hampstead, took an early dinner with Rogers,¹³ and at six o'clock in the evening went with him and Mrs Rogers to Coleridge's soir  e at Highgate. The philosopher lives in the house of a Mr Gilman, surgeon and apothecary, on the terrace at the entrance from Kentish Town, the site (it is said) of Arundel House where Bacon died. I am told that Coleridge was at first put under the medical surveillance of this gentleman when, a few years since, he was disordered in mind, and that he has ever since continued to reside with him as a friend. The good host and hostess seem to be very much attached to their guest, who attracts many visitors on Thursday evenings, when he holds forth to the general edification. Basil Montague¹⁴ has often pressed me to go with him, he being a constant attendant; but something or other has always occurred to prevent me, and I now went under the auspices of my excellent friend Rogers. The first report on our arrival was that the philosopher was so ill as to make

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it doubtful whether he would be able to join us; and we spent nearly an hour (during which we were joined by the learned Basil, his lady, and Irving¹⁵) before he made his appearance, which he did at last (as Mrs Rogers told me), in consequence of her having informed him that I had come purposely to be introduced to him. Nothing could be more courteous than his manner of welcoming, and his hopes that I should renew my visit. He soon took his chair, and began to hold forth *ex cathedra*. He brought downstairs with him the folio edition of Baxter's *History of his Life and Times*, as a sort of text to preach from, and at first began to eulogize the book and its author. The former bore witness to the value he appears to set upon it from the number of registers inserted in almost every page. The author he designated as the most eminently entitled of any character he knows to the blessings of the peacemaker. From Baxter the strain of his argument flowed almost imperceptibly into metaphysics and the most abstruse mysteries of religion. . . . From the Unitarians he changed his battery to the Scotch Presbyterian Church; and so resolved were all present to do nothing but listen, that even this attack failed to rouse the Caledonian apostle, who (except by the interposi-

tion of one solitary attempt at illustration) was a silent hearer during the whole evening. For myself, I was certainly very much struck with his wonderful powers both of speech and thought, with the flow of his imagery and happiness of his illustrations; but I was often unable to follow him, and concur fully in the observation I have heard made on the *cloudy brilliancy* of his discourse. My curiosity is not by any means satisfied; on the contrary, I feel strongly urged to repeat my visit and endeavour to form a more distinct idea of his real powers than I have at present."

Sept. 4 (Sunday). To-day Herman and I walked to Highgate, where we went to church; thence to Hampstead, where we (with my wife and Reginald who joined us from Town) dined at my father's. After church Herman and I called at Coleridge's, which was the main object of our going to Highgate, and we had an hour of most interesting conversation with (or rather holding forth of) that most singular and highly gifted man. He began with Religion and Metaphysics. . . . We then talked (or rather *he* talked) of Predestination and Coplestone, whom he called a worthy good man, but seemed to value very little as a metaphysician!

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I could not follow him in this part of his discourse, which appeared to me abundantly mystical. Referring to our friend Rogers, he maintained that a man may be too thoroughly *good* to become distinguished, that to be so (i.e. *distinguished*,) a man should have some spice of the Devil in his composition, nay—that a portion of the devilish may stand a man in stead of all actual talents and acquirements—e.g. Bonaparte, whom he holds to be infinitely over-rated. Thence we slid into Grammar—Matthiae's Greek—Philosophical Grammar. . . . Thence to Webster on Witchcraft, and writers on Witchcraft generally. Baxter, (another instance of a man being too unmixedly good)—Jacob Behmen, etc. I left him, still unconvinced both of the soundness and clearness of his perceptions, but astonished at his vast flow of words, retentiveness of memory, fecundity of illustration, and exalted powers of eloquence, and with a determination not to throw away the privilege he seems disposed to grant me of a more intimate acquaintance."

"1826, Jan. 9. Last Monday went with Herman to Hampstead, and dined at Mallet's, where we met Miss Aikin, a clever, sensible little woman, and, though an incessant talker,

not of so deep a blue as might have been imagined. . .”

In 1819 Mr Merivale had made the acquaintance of Isaac D'Israeli, the author of *Curiosities of Literature*, but now chiefly remembered as the father of Lord Beaconsfield, “who lives in a magnificent house (for an author) in Bloomsbury Square (No 6) surrounded with books and new publications.” He had “a most civil and flattering reception” on the occasion of a call; but found him “incredibly, almost ludicrously, dull in conversation, perpetually aiming at something like wit and attempting to tell a story, in which he uniformly fails in manner burlesque enough to make a stage character.”

It was here that he first met Lockhart, appointed editor of the *Quarterly Review* on the resignation of Gifford, a post which rumour had assigned to Merivale himself. The second occasion was at a memorable dinner at Hampstead. Of the first he writes:

“Jan. 16, 1826. I dined at D'Israeli's, met Robert Ward the author of *Tremaine*, Dr Henderson (on Wines), and the great lions of the winter, Lockhart and his lady, a most pleasing and interesting and I should say pretty

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woman, whom it was my good fortune to sit by, and with whom I had a great deal of talk about Abbotsford, etc. She seems to have the true *Maladie du Pays*, and to be pining for Ettrick Forest. I do not so much admire her husband, but saw him at a disadvantage, as he was declared to be fagged to death with the fatigues of his editorial office, and went to sleep after dinner.”¹⁶

Then on Feb. 27 of the same year he writes:

“On Saturday went to Hampstead, and dined at Miss Baillie’s, where I met Mr and Mrs Lockhart, Richardson¹⁷ (the Scotch Agent for appeals in the House of Lords, a most sensible and well-informed person, the intimate friend of Sir Walter Scott, Campbell, etc.) Mrs Richardson, Miss Milligan and her sister, Mrs Ewen, and William Baillie. Lockhart by no means improves on acquaintance. He is evidently under great restraint in company, probably from knowing how he stands as an object of suspicion on account of his connexion with *Blackwood* and the worthies of the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*. On one occasion, he so far forgot his reserve as to utter some very flippant remarks upon Campbell, as a person of no learning, who filters his Greek criticisms

Windmill Hill, Hampstead.



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Merivale

Baillie

through a German medium, for which he was quietly but effectually *set down* by Richardson."

Two more entries complete the Hampstead group.

In the June of 1829, old Mrs Merivale died, and John Herman and his family came to Hampstead for the summer, and in 1831 we find it recorded that they again lived here for the greater part of the year. But about these visits there is not much in the Diary.

January 11, 1840, we read:

"On Thursday, dined with Sir John Richardson's,¹⁸—only their family party. George Selwyn and Sarah, he a very gentleman-like, sensible person."

The George Selwyn here mentioned was in the following year appointed the first bishop of New Zealand. He was born in Hampstead. Dean Merivale was elected to a fellowship at St John's College, Cambridge, the very same day, and rowed as four with the future bishop in the first boat-race in 1829.

Here is another glimpse of the Baillies:

"March 9. Yesterday called and sat an hour at the Miss Baillies'. Agnes, nearly eighty years old, has been engaging in the pursuit of Druidi-

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cal antiquities, with an ardour worthy of the youngest adventurer, making them all subservient to her Scriptural inquiries."

Agnes Baillie lived another twenty years. She died on April 27, 1861, aged 100 years and seven months.

Two little memories of her own, given by Miss Merivale to the writer, may find place here:

"My grandfather, John Merivale, lived many years and died in a house on Windmill Hill, next door to that of the Miss Baillies, which we children often inhabited in spring and early summer. Our neighbours were very kind to us, and I well remember one evening, when I was four or five years old, their keeping me imprisoned in their drawing-room whilst my elders, cousins as well as brothers and sisters, were playing out in the garden. Many years later I went with my mother to call on Miss Agnes Baillie, not long before her death. Her mind was much gone, and she told us how she had seen Napoleon riding up the hill to her, which, of course, was mere imagination."

Edward Irving, the founder of the sect, has been mentioned as being present at one of the

meetings with Coleridge. He had come to London in 1822, causing a great sensation in a society which had a general belief in an impending end of the world.

Mr Merivale was much interested. On July 2, 1823, he writes in his diary:

"On Sunday Herman and I crowded into the Caledonian Chapel to hear the celebrated Irving, who exceeded my highest expectations. I certainly never witnessed such a combination of all the qualities of an orator in such high perfection. Countenance, gesture, voice, all grand and imposing in the greatest degree. Frequency and force of imagery equal to Jeremy Taylor; in flow of words and structure of sentences, perhaps, more resembling Barrow. . . . To conclude, a tone and manner inspiring the hearers with a conviction of truth and sincerity, and of a belief in the preacher of his own divine appointment to the office of persuasion and reformation. I saw Lords Liverpool, Lansdowne, Aberdeen, Essex, Canning, Heber, and many more persons of distinction whose persons were unknown to me."

A few days later, on July 6, he writes:

"We dined by appointment at Denman's, and met only Butler and Brougham. I don't

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know when I have spent so delightful an evening. Brougham is all, and more than all, I had fancied. Such infinite variety, such depth and readiness of knowledge on every conceivable subject, such ease and gracefulness of delivery, and a manner so wholly unassuming and courteous, I never before met with, and believe to be unrivalled. Butler, also, was in great good humour and full of anecdote. Denman in raptures with Irving."

And again on July 20:

"Went to hear Irving. Less pleased with him on the whole than on either of the former occasions. No great faults, but less splendour to redeem them, and considerable tediousness. In parts, however, very fine and impressive, and with the same air of earnest sincerity and warm devotion which form the principal charm of his eloquence. . . . There appeared to me to be a still greater concourse of carriages and coronets than before. Vansittart was there, Heber, and, I believe, some of the Royal family."

On December 15, after hearing Irving yet again, he says that, upon the whole, his first opinion is not changed.

By 1827 Irving had established himself in a large new church in Regent's Square, where, we are told, 1,000 persons were wont, Sunday after Sunday, to attend to hear him preach for three hours on end! Here we have a picture of the preacher in social life:

"Jan. 19, 1824. On Saturday evening with Herman to Montague's with a view to meeting the Scotch preacher, Irving, whom we found there accordingly, and who received us as if he were *maître d'hôtel* and took the visit entirely to himself. They were discussing the late prosecution of Byron's *Vision of Judgment*, concerning which Irving avowed that he had scarcely read a syllable—a tolerably bold avowal for a man who had undertaken to censure it, by name, from the pulpit. He went away soon after our arrival, and pressed my hand in both his own at parting. I did not see enough of him to form a judgment, but what I did was not favourable. . . . We had also the lover, Barry Cornwall—by far the best of the company."¹⁹

A month or so later we have the following about Tom Moore:

"March 21. Dined on Monday at Mr Orme's, by invitation, to meet Tom Moore, who was

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there, with Dr Thompson (a great literary character, on what founded I know not), his wife and sister, Martin Archer Shee (the painter), Rose and Norton and their wives, and Rees. For a *lion*, Moore behaved well, and was very tolerably entertaining. All the rest stupid enough. A terrible large evening party—the whole firm of Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green and Co., besides wives, sisters and daughters, and numerous others. Stayed to hear Moore sing a melody from the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and then departed without beat of drum.”

In the early part of 1819 Mr Merivale had been introduced to an Italian poet, Foscolo, who was a refugee in England from 1816 to his death in 1827. “His erudition was profound, and his literary industry enormous,” but he was extremely eccentric and a man of ill-regulated passions.²⁰ Merivale called on him in reference to *Richardetto*. It is a delicious picture:

“Not very encouraging as to the probable success of *Richardetto*. . . . It is not only, he says, that it will not suit the English taste, but it will not suit the taste of the age, that a new Morgante, or a new Ricciardetto, even twenty

times better than the original, would not now succeed even in Italy. Mere amusement will not suffice. The taste requires excitement, passion and interest. But he advises me (as D'Israeli also does) to launch what I have already written. Much of himself and his pursuits. Says he would give up Literature if he could not make it produce him £100 per month. . . . He is as much wrapped up in himself as Wordsworth. . . . There is a frankness and generosity of manner about him, with all his egotism and spirit of a trader in Literature. The latter, I am convinced, is the true spirit in which Literature ought to be undertaken—and the more open the better. Nevertheless, from inveterate habit, I could not talk of guineas per sheet as Foscolo does, and do not even now understand what compensation I am to receive for what I have undertaken to do. I can't say much for Foscolo's taste in furnishing a room, which, nevertheless, he is very proud of. Crimson carpet, orange chair and sofa furniture, and orange paper for the room, green and white window curtains. This can't be called a chaste and severe style. At parting I asked him to dine with me, which he said he would be very happy to do *tête-à-tête*, but not to-day. Sundays he is always engaged

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in a family party—walks with young ladies in Portman Square in the evening, then returns, and the eldest reads prayers, and a bad sermon afterwards. ‘So you see,’ he adds, putting his hand to his heart, ‘*c’est une affaire de cœur.*’”

However he was tempted, at any rate on one occasion, to allow other guests to dine with him. Among those who came in after dinner was Mrs Trollope, mother of Anthony, and herself writer of many novels. She brought with her ‘the redoubtable’ Miss Wright,²¹ ‘the philanthropist and agitator,’ whose misguided advice probably had much to do with the unfortunate Mr Trollope’s financial troubles.

“Foscolo was peculiarly paradoxical and entertaining, mostly, however, on the stale subject of ‘Love’ and the young ladies. Mrs T. came in her deepest blue stockings; and her friend, Miss Wright, left a party to which she had been expressly summoned on purpose to become acquainted with the accomplished ‘Ortiz.’ What was the impression he made on them I know not; but it was easy to perceive he did not form the most exalted estimate of the ladies’ perfections, and that the ‘Siddonian glances’ which Kean detected the other night in Mrs T. were entirely thrown

away on Foscolo, who shrugged up his shoulders and observed that she was *very blue*."

The following account of "Conversation Sharp" is cited in the *Dictionary of National Biography*:

"January 3, 1820. Dined at Mawman's the Bookseller, where were Conversation Sharpe, Denman, Butler the conveyancer, Friend, Ray (the Prothonotary), Pollock, and two young men, in all ten of us—a great deal of anecdote and very pleasant. Sharpe told of Burke, that being at the Eumelian in company with himself (Sharpe), Wyndham, Greathead, and one or two more, and Wyndham praising the early events of the French Revolution, the taking of the Bastille, etc., shortly after that event had taken place, Burke all the while he was speaking took long and hasty strides across the room—at length came up to him with his hands extended and with vast emphasis of accent and gesture, and asked if he really thought as he said: Wyndham assented, upon which Burke, with still greater vehemence, asked whether he would wish the same scenes to be acted in England under similar circumstances; and, Wyndham still assenting, he assumed a prophetic voice and

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attitude, and exclaimed, 'Then I see a spirit raised which will not again be laid,' etc., describing the anticipated horrors of the Revolution in the most flowing language, and with the most vivid powers of oratory. . . ." Sharpe told a pleasant story "from some French Book, of a country in which it is supposed to be necessary, in order to attain the chief offices in the State, to look through a certain telescope at the sun and assert that its form is triangular. An honest would-be Minister being condemned to take this test in the presence of the Archbishop, could not be prevailed to declare that the figure was any other than round, upon which he was pronounced to be unfit for office; but being left alone with the Archbishop he afterwards asked him in a familiar way what he himself really thought of the matter, upon which the Archbishop said he must own it had always appeared to him that it was a very round looking triangle. . . . Sharpe says that the House of Commons is at present (setting aside Pitt and Fox,) more eloquent than he ever remembers it; and there never was a time when eloquence in Parliament had more success attending it—not immediately, but progressively, and by the force of public opinion. . . .

“Sydney Smith has sent up the Draft of a Bill for abolishing all female children within the age of three—especially Brougham’s daughter. Walter Scott has received, or is to receive, £9000 for his two new novels, to raise a corps of Yeomanry cavalry therewith for the defence of the South of Scotland against the Radicals. Query, if Authorship is not the best trade going. Walter Scott says he was born to be a soldier, and he is determined to die one.”

Here is a cameo of Dean Ireland of Westminster, the founder of scholarships and prizes:

“November 23, 1825. To-day, in consequence of the invitation conveyed to me by Gifford, I called on Dean Ireland, and was received by him very cordially. He was sitting alone in his library, wearing a black velvet cap, and reading Milton’s theological treatise (as he told me) very critically.”

And here is a good story :

“When Lord Northington was Master of the Rolls, being a very honest and conscientious Judge, though somewhat of a free liver, he spoke to the King about the evening sittings, which he wished to be changed so as to enable

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him to sit in the morning instead. The King spoke of the objectionableness of altering established customs without adequate reason and on a mere principle of convenience, asking the M.R. what ground he had for asking it, to which he answered frankly that it went against his conscience, for, being in the habit of getting drunk of an afternoon, he could not answer at all times for the correctness of his decisions. (This is one of the Chancellor's stories [Shadwell?], who says he had it from the old King, who used to relate it as a proof of his scrupulous honesty)."

"December 15. Met at Goodenough's with Dr Philpotts of Durham, afterwards Bishop of Exeter, whom I had not been in company with before for a great many years—not, I believe, since the time that he was at Harrow, when it was the joke among some of the most reprobate of our fraternity to personate him in all improper parts of the town, and where there was any chance of a row, etc., calling out 'Philpott! Philpott!' and other such profane pieces of amusement."

Fancy!

The following story of Queen Victoria is probably not new; but it will bear repeating:

“June 15, 1840. The Queen is to open Parliament in person, and *announce* her own approaching marriage. Lady Langdale has a story that on her being complimented by one of her ladies on her *courage* in making public announcement of such an event, she answered, ‘Oh, it is nothing at all, after having undergone the awkwardness of making the proposal to Albert himself.’ ”

In conclusion, a glimpse of Wordsworth.

“May 13, 1842. Dined with my wife at Henry Nelson Coleridge’s to meet Wordsworth the Poet. Sat next him at dinner, and had a talk with him about his Sonnets, Capital Punishment, etc., Crabbe Robinson was of our party, which consisted, besides, of Judge Coleridge and his Lady, Mr Quillinan (Wordsworth’s son-in-law) and young William Wordsworth. I do not think we were any of us very brilliant or instructive,—the usual consequence of the presence of a Lion, though Wordsworth himself was wholly without pretension.”

The Mallets have once or twice been mentioned. John Lewis Mallet was married to “Fanny,” Merivale’s only surviving sister. The son of the famous Mallet du Pan, the

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Swiss, he and his wife lived many years in Hampstead. There is an interesting record of the stirring times of his early life, in a volume of autobiography edited by his son, Sir Louis Mallet.²² And this we are told is a mere fragment. There exist forty books of MS. full of social and political reminiscences. Mr Hugo Mallet, his grandson, is considering the project of publishing a volume of selections. It will without doubt be quite as interesting as the former.

Mr Hugo Mallet has kindly sent the following extract from Mr Mallet's journal. It is dated April, 1844.

“How unexpected and sudden are the transitions of life! How little we know about the morrow! On Wednesday we were rejoicing with our friends the Horner's, on Thursday it pleased God to deprive us of our dear brother Merivale, without any warning or premonitory symptoms, to all appearance in a state of perfect health, promising a long life. We had thought him peculiarly well during the winter, bright-looking, cheerful, active, free from cares; having great enjoyment of his new house in Bedford Square, and the enlarged hospital-ity it enabled him to exercise.

“The last time we saw him (and, as Mr Jackson said of him, he never entered a house without giving pleasure) he had been walking from town with two of his daughters, and came in with that bright animated countenance, glowing with health and that mild benignant eye and broad white forehead, all bespeaking, independently of the grasp of his hand, the warm affectionate feelings within. There was in the expression of his countenance, an openness and conscious integrity, a sweetness and benevolence which disposed all hearts towards him, and no man was indeed ever more beloved. On his quitting us we all observed how well he was and how young he looked for his age, an impression which his firm gait and powers of exercise tended to confirm, and so he continued to the day of his death. It was the Queen’s birthday, and he had been to St James’s Street with some of his daughters to see the carriages: it was a hot day and he probably heated and fatigued himself, but the Lyells who met him returning were struck with his good looks. He dined with his wife and daughters and was particularly cheerful at dinner, having called at Pickering’s, his bookseller, who had told him he should soon want a second edition of his *Schiller’s Lyrics*.

“After dinner when the ladies went upstairs,

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he took possession of his own chair, in which he often took a nap, and it appears that he subsequently went into his study and wrote about half a page of something intended for his second edition, leaving off in the middle of a sentence, not improbably from fatigue and uneasiness, for he had complained in the morning of a little headache. He then took a book, a volume of Churchill's Poems, lately republished, and went back to the dining-room and his chair, where he appears to have fallen asleep. Not coming up to tea at the usual time, his eldest daughter Louisa, the companion of his mind and the associate of his literary labours, went down to remind him of the time and found him gone. His book was on the ground, his eyes closed and his beautiful countenance perfectly placid: his guardian angel had withdrawn him with the gentle hand of Divine Mercy whilst asleep—a blessed transition for a good man and a Christian as he was, an appropriate close to a virtuous, happy and useful life. . .

“If I looked to him as one who would have been a second father to my boys, what must be the loss to his own children? Domestic in his habits, sedulous to inculcate right feelings and generous sympathies in all those around him, availing himself in their favour on all proper

Barton Place, Exeter.



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occasions of the love and respect he enjoyed in the world, it is indeed to them an irreparable loss. Considered and popular as Merivale was at the Bar and in Society, possessing faculties of no common order, known by works of great elegance and poetical merit, having children who closely followed in his footsteps and distinguished themselves in their respective vocations, it might have been pardonable in him to have felt a little elated and exclusive; but nothing could exceed his modesty, unassuming disposition, gentleness of manner; he was the same man to all men, of whatever rank and station. No man, living as he did in the world—the world of Law, the world of Literature and the Social world, was ever less tainted with the world or retained greater simplicity of tastes and habits. The cultivation of literature and more particularly of his poetical powers were, from first to last his greatest and most habitual source of pleasure, and when he could combine these pursuits with the enjoyment of his woods and walks in his beautiful little domain in Devonshire on the banks of the Exe, he was a perfectly happy man and would not have exchanged these satisfactions and the kind hospitality he delighted in exercising, for any station and advantages in the world.

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“Although a great reader on a great variety of subjects and with a mind which embraced a great range of intellectual enquiry, he took a proper, and, often an intense, interest in what was passing in the world. He never travelled, never crossed the Channel nor went to Paris, the scene of such extraordinary contemporaneous events; he never saw anything either of Scotland or Ireland, but came back to Barton Place as often as the Long Vacation came round and there enjoyed his old associations and pursuits. Merivale’s love of literature was not however like that of some literary men, a pursuit merely of taste and personal gratification, but it was connected in his mind with every generous impulse and the most active kindness and warmest sympathy for any brother poet to whom fortune might have been unpropitious. I have no doubt that many such instances of kindly feeling are known to his family and friends, but I remember two which I will mention; the one was his editing a volume of poems of his friend Mr Bland, of which the proceeds were to be applied to the education of Mr Bland’s son, and also his raising a subscription for his widow and family; the other, of a later date, the assistance and encouragement he gave to Mr Shannon, an Irishman in

every sense of the word, whom he did not know personally, but whose misfortunes and talents interested him and for whom he obtained a Government gratification of £50 from Sir R. Peel.

“Merivale’s faults were of a generous kind, he was too emulous of approbation, and keenly felt any want of sympathy, and, as his facility for writing sometimes made him enter the field as a volunteer in public questions, he was apt to be annoyed and depressed when his exertions failed of attracting proper notice; and yet no man was more ready and more willing at all times to discuss his opinions, and to subject them to the test of enquiry; for he was a sincere lover of truth. His hospitality was perhaps greater than strict prudence would have approved with twelve children, but it was the fault of a generous and social nature, and wholly free from ostentation. Merivale had no selfish pleasures; no man was more free from vanity; his social disposition never tended to fashionable life; he was always courteous and ready to serve, nor did he pay that sort of tribute to *Lions* which is so common in England. We sometimes joked with him as to the sort of people he brought together, belonging as they often did to classes of society and classes of opinion wide apart, but

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he always contended for the greater freedom and liberality of his own views of social intercourse and the consequence generally was a more liberal tone of conversation and less of party and professional topics.

“I fear that Merivale did not consider himself so successful in his profession as the public held him to have been. Lord Denman and Sir Launcelot Shadwell were his intimate college friends, and he afterwards for many years struggled at the Bar with Denman, both making up the paucity of fees by very hard exertions for reviews and periodical publications. He afterwards saw Denman carried to the King’s Bench by the tide of politics and his own fine independent character; he saw Shadwell born in the lap of the Law and favoured by circumstances, rise to the post of Vice-Chancellor; and those splendid instances of good fortune were too habitually in Merivale’s eye. He had likewise hoped from his active and useful exertions as a member of the Commission for Chancery Reform that he might have looked to be a Master, in which expectation he was disappointed; but considering that his emoluments at the Bar never, I believe, exceeded £1000 a year, his Commissionership of Bankruptcy was no doubt a handsome provision. These things

are not however always reasoned out and the proper conclusions drawn.

“The manner in which he filled his office (not however a laborious office) was I believe, exemplary, and nothing could exceed the kind feelings and respect towards him of the members of the Court, high and low, of the practitioners and their clients. Mr Roper, our neighbour here, a merchant, went upon some business to the Bankruptcy Court on Friday, the 26, the day after Merivale’s death, and he was so struck with the silence which pervaded the Court that he could not understand it until Mr Edwards, one of the assignees, told him the intelligence they had just received, and added that it was a loss that would be felt by all, from the judges to the lowest clerks, beloved and respected as he was, by every individual there.”

John Herman Merivale died on April 25, 1844. He was buried on May 2 in the family grave at Hampstead, where he rests with his father and mother, one of his grandsons, and his son Reginald, his sister Frances, and her husband, J. L. Mallet. Tablets have been erected to both Mr Merivale and Mr Mallet in corresponding positions over the south and

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north aisle doors. That to Mr Merivale is inscribed:

“Sacred to the memory of John Herman Merivale, Esq^{re}, of Barton Place, near Exeter, and Bedford Square, London; one of the Commissioners in her Majesty’s Court of Bankruptcy. Born August 5, 1779; died April 25, 1844.”

It is pleasant to think of how delightedly he must have received news of the demand for that “second edition” of the *Schiller*.

The very last letter, received on March 24, 1844, was from Joanna Baillie, who wrote in reference to it:

“It is a work that will be often in our hands; for the spirited and beautiful language with which you and your son have clothed the different pieces make the translation as good to the mind and the ear as originals.”

How this must have gratified him!

The portrait which is reproduced in this little book is from an engraving after a drawing by Eddis. The original was done in 1838 when its subject was fifty-nine years of age.²³ It hangs in the vestry of Hampstead Church, next to Bishop Selwyn, and balancing a pretty

water-colour portrait of Joanna Baillie, also reproduced here. Mrs Merivale's description of her husband, written shortly after his death, tells us: "He was considered a remarkably fine looking man, and particularly young looking for his age, his face being quite free from wrinkles and his figure very upright. He measured 5ft 11in. His hair, though grey, had still a slight hue of brown mixed with it. His complexion was fair and eyes hazel." His old friend, Provost Hodgson, of Eton, wrote some verses on this portrait, which may make a conclusion:

Thy pictured form, dear friend, recalls the thought
 Of many a cheerful, many a pensive day,
 And treasured scenes to wakening memory brought,
 And the long track of Life's mysterious way.

Throned in that ample brow was Reason's power,
 Thy stores of knowledge ready to employ;
 While o'er the fancies of thy lighter hour
 Shone the glad freedom of a guileless boy.

Ah! what shall now restore the friendly talk,
 The brightening joy of those ingenuous eyes,
 When, as we roamed along our rural walk,
 Earth, air and light to us "were paradise"?

But holier far the well-remembered theme,
 When first we mused on that Redeeming Love,
 And mix'd with sacred Truth our youthful dream—
 Oh! may it bless—and join—us, there above!

NOTES

Note 1, page 14. *Memoirs*, etc., pp. 277, 278.

Note 2, page 15. See Arnould's *Life of Lord Denman*, vol. II, p. 160.

Note 3, page 15. Lord Chief Justice 1832-1850. He was a pupil of Mrs Barbauld. *Memories of Seventy Years* [by Mrs Le Breton, née Aikin], Edited by Mrs Herbert Martin, 1883 [daughter of Mrs Le Breton] p. 148-9.

Note 4, page 18. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

Note 5, page 18. *Letters and Journals*, new edition, edited by Rowland E. Prothero, 1898, etc., vol. III, p. 5, Jan. 1814.

Note 6, page 19. *Letters and Journals*, vol. II, pp. 392-3.

Note 7, page 22. *Quarterly Review*, 1839, vol. LXIV, pp. 406-11.

Note 8, page 23. *Family Memorials*, compiled by Anna W. Merivale. Printed for private circulation. Exeter: Thomas Upward, Printer, High Street, 1884.

Note 9, page 23. *Some Hampstead Memories*, by Mary Adams, 1909.

Note 10, page 24. Cf. *Memories of Seventy Years*, p. 157. A view of "Mount Grove," Mr Longman's house referred to in the text, is in the Hampstead Parish Church Picture Collection.

Note 11, page 24. Brevet Col. Mark Wilks, Governor of St Helena, 1813-15 (?). Dr Roget, probably the first Fullerian professor of Physiology Royal Institution and Secretary to the Royal Society.

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Note 12, page 26. Thomas Erskine (1750-1823) youngest son of the Earl of Buchan, the renowned lawyer, Lord Chancellor 1806-7, resided in Hampstead for many years. His first wife Frances died in 1805, and was buried in the churchyard. Her husband erected a handsome monument in the Church to her memory. There is an engraving of it in Park's *Topography of Hampstead*, 1818.

Note 13, p. 27. Mr Lawrence Rogers, a police magistrate in London. He was the father of the Rev. Wm Rogers, Rector of Bishopsgate, "Hang Theology Rogers."

Note 14, p. 27. Basil Montague (1770-1851), the friend of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and editor of Bacon.

Note 15, p. 28. Edward Irving, the preacher.

Note 16, page 32. Robert Plumer Ward (1765-1846) Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, etc.; John Gibson Lockhart (1794-1854), the biographer of Scott. Mrs Lockhart was the eldest daughter of Sir Walter Scott.

Note 17, page 32. John Richardson (1780-1864). "Johnnie Richardson, a good, honourable, kind-hearted little fellow, with a pretty taste for poetry which he has wisely kept under subjection to the occupation of drawing briefs and revising conveyances," lived, I believe, on Windmill Hill. See Lockhart: *Life of Scott*. Letter from Sir Walter Scott to Joanna Baillie, Dec. 10, 1813.

Note 18, page 33. Sir John Richardson (1771-1841) puisne judge of the court of common pleas; the father-in-law of Bishop G. A. Selwyn.

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Note 19, p. 37. Bryan Waller Procter (1787-1874), who married Miss Skepper, the daughter, by a former husband, of Mrs Basil Montague. He was the father of Adelaide Anne Procter.

Note 20, p. 38. Louisa A. Merivale, *I Poeti Italiani Moderni*, London, 1865, p. 148.

Note 21, p. 40. Frances Wright, afterwards Darusmont (1795-1852), was, among many other things, greatly interested in the slavery question. D. N. B.

Note 22, p. 46. *John Lewis Mallet: An Autobiographical Retrospect of the First Twenty-five Years of His Life.* Edited by Sir Louis Mallet. Printed for private circulation, by Thomas E. Luff, Windsor, 1890.

Note 23, page 54. Regarding this portrait Mr Merivale wrote in his diary:

“April 13, 1838. Yesterday had my first sitting with Mr Eddis—a gentlemanly young man, who has a brother an undergraduate at Trinity, and entertained me with some of the late saturnalian proceedings at that seminary of religious learning and sound education. I think he bids fair to make of my countenance the likeness of an old weather-beaten military debauchee, with rather an affected grin—which (I am afraid) is natural to me from the unfortunate habit, attendant on early *mauvaise honte*, of putting on a company face.”



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